



Laity

BILA 1 ON SCCs OCT. 18-23 2010 Redemptorist Centre, Pattaya, Thailand (Organized by AsIPA Desk, Office of Laity & Family of FABC)

FINAL STATEMENT



Greetings in the Lord! Greetings also for Christmas and the New Year!

This newsletter

was deliberately withheld until we could put in a report on our October events and wish you at the same time for Christmas! We hope you have a wonderful year end and great new year resolutions which you can keep!!

As I take over my duties with the Office of Laity and Family, together with our Bishop Chairman Bishop Rolando Tria Tirona, other bishop members and the Executive Secretaries for AsIPA and Youth, we look forward to remaining in contact with you and hearing from you about your concerns and needs. Next year we

Introduction

"The Church in Asia will have to be a Communion of Communities" in the third millennium. This was the Spirit-inspired dream the FABC Plenary Assembly in Bandung in 1990 set for the Asian Church. The bishops, clergy, religious and laity, 90 in all, gathered here in the Redemptorist Centre, Pattaya in Thailand for the first BILA (Bishops Institute on Lay Apostolate) on SCCs (Small Christian Communities) from Oct. 18 to 23 2010, feel grateful to God for inspiring our Bishops of Asia with such a vision. It has guided the Asian church to move in this direction of a New Way of Being Church through building SCCs, ensuring participation of all the faithful in the life and mission of the Church.

Strengthened by Word and Sacrament

Through Gospel Sharing in SCCs the Word of God has gained due importance, as taught by Vatican II. Indeed, we can see the hand of Jesus in shaping these communities through His calling of thousands of ordinary people as animators at the service of SCCs building in 17 Asian countries. The Lord Himself strengthens them constantly through His Word and Sacrament (FABC Bandung Statement, No. 8.1.1). The Spirit has actively guided the Asian Church by providing inspiration, resources and organizational networks to plan consistently to make that vision a reality in the lives of the people of Asia. It has resulted in building up of AsIPA (Asian Integral Pasto

FABC Office of the Laity and Family

JULY - DEC 2010



*Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences FABC
Office of Laity and Family
2 Highland Road #01-09, Singapore 549102
Tel: 65-96265911, DID: 65-68587081
Email: fabc.laityfamily@gmail.com*

Continued...Executive Secretary's Message

will hold the AsIPA Two workshop in October and have a BILA on the Family & Women early in 2012. Our focus will be on pastoral concerns that the church wishes to address. Concerns that families & women face in the different contexts of Asia. Our original plan to hold the BILA II on Family in May 2011 is not possible as there will be another conference on family for the Asian region held in Bangkok. We look forward to receiving your feedback on how the theme of FABC 9 "Living the Eucharist in Asia" has been implemented in your SCCs or in your ministry to

families, women and in the movements.

This year I have been busy: handing over the AsIPA desk to the new Executive Secretary for the AsIPA Desk, Dr Joo-Hyun Ro (Bibiana); also we just completed the First BILA on SCCs and the first in a series of three AsIPA training workshops both in October.

We were very encouraged by your enthusiastic participation in these events and we look forward to a great deal of connectedness between us all as we implement our programmes towards the New Way of Being Church.

If you have news for our "Laity" newsletter I would love to receive it.

If you wish to receive the newsletter by hard copy and are only receiving the e-version, please let us know. We appreciate very much any help that can be extended to us financially towards cost of printing and distributing this newsletter.

Yours in Christ,
Wendy Louis
Executive Secretary
Office of Laity and Family

Continued...BILA 1 on SCCs



AsIPA Resource Team with trainers at Pattaya BILA I on SCCs.

ral Approach) animation team and development of formation materials. We organized 5 AsIPA General Assemblies and several national assemblies. All these have contributed to the emergence of thousands of SCCs all over Asia.

Guided by Church Leadership

The Holy Spirit initiated this vision of a New Way of Being Church through the Bishops of Asia and Her/His guiding action can be seen in several National Bishops Conferences and many individual bishops in their own dioceses, giving SCCs pastoral priority. Many countries set up national animation teams and SCC offices for promotion of SCCs. The Spirit continues to inspire increasing numbers of priests and religious to dedicate themselves to the promotion of a New Way of Being Church. They testify that their involvement in SCCs

has helped them to re-discover their vocation as facilitators, enablers and unifiers of communities. Several bishops too are on the teams of animators. This is a welcome sign.

Renewed Church as Communion of Communities

SCCs have indeed taken the Church back to its origin of being a people's Church in their own home environment. It has helped in unfolding the mystery of God's Word hidden for ages (Col. 1:25-27), and to live the good news of the Gospel in a spirit of love and fraternal/sisterly service (EA. No. 25). Truly the Gospel is ever new and fresh, allowing people to befriend neighbours without prejudices, build new bridges in their broken relationships and discover new hopes in the midst of disillusionment of life. The emergence of SCCs has directly facilitated a new awakening in

thousands of laity who are inspired and motivated to serve communities. Seeing the renewal SCCs brought to the Church the Asian Synod Fathers affirmed "SCCs as an effective way to promote communion and participation in parishes and dioceses" (EA. No. 25). SCCs make the Asian face of Jesus visible and through their loving services become the seed for a new society based on love (RM. No. 51).

Challenged To Move Forward

Even as we rejoice and celebrate the blooming of thousands of SCCs all over Asia, they raise new challenges and problems affecting their growth. If SCCs must grow strong as churches in the neighbourhood, Church leaders must have the skills to accompany these communities and enable them systematically to face the tensions and challenges of daily life.

Passivity in members of our church and lack of Catholic understanding of the Sacred Scriptures make them easy prey to proselytizers, attuning themselves to teachers which turn them away from the truth of the Gospel (2 Tim. 4:4). It is only authentic living which can make our witnessing genuine. Only when we are "God-realized persons", our Asian brothers and sisters



can be touched and drawn to Jesus (FABC Bandung Statement, No.9.2). SCCs, for want of trained animators, still see themselves as prayer groups and need to be enlightened to see themselves as “disciples who follow-Jesus-in-his-mission”, (FABC Bandung Statement, No. 9.1). They must respond diligently to their missionary responsibilities in their neighbourhood to make the Kingdom plan of God come true in their daily lives as they continue to pray in the great prayer “Our Father”. Let us take to heart the encouraging exhortation of our beloved Holy Father Pope John Paul II of fond memory to the Asian Church, “*With the Synod, I encourage the Church in Asia, where possible, to consider these basic communities as a positive feature of the Church’s evangelizing activity*” (EA. No. 25). With humility

and deep trust, we turn to God for new light and strength to address these difficulties.

Recommended Actions

The onward journey of guiding the growth of the New Way of Being Church in our parishes demands systematic and well-planned pastoral strategies, with the courage and commitment to follow them up faithfully.

- a) We request the Bishops Conferences and individual bishops to reiterate formation, sustenance and promotion of SCCs as pastoral priorities and follow it up with appropriate action plans.
- b) In the next 20 years we need well trained animators at every level who can guide the existing communities into active evangelizing communities.
- c) Church authorities be seen as solidly behind this new pastoral vision and facilitate structural changes which will facilitate the process of SCCs building in parishes.
- d) We need many clergy and religious who are full-time enablers and motivators of communities.
- e) Dioceses need to ensure that

communities which are formed are sustained and nurtured.

- f) It is not enough to appoint someone as SCCs coordinator, but that person should be appropriately trained and enabled to function with sufficient resources.
- g) Take special care to introduce seminarians and candidates of religious communities systematically into SCCs building and animation.

Filled with Renewed Hope

We are experiencing now the new hope SCCs are bringing into the Church as prophesied by Pope Paul VI (EN No. 58) and servant of God, Pope John Paul II (RM No. 51). Let us accept these renewing experiences in our parishes given by the Spirit, as a beacon for new light and energy to keep animating communities. We recall and repeat with the Bishops who gathered at Bandung in 1990, “With a prayer on our lips and a hope in our hearts, we entrust ourselves to Mary, the Mother of Jesus. She is our Guide for the Way. She will help the Church in Asia to keep on the right path even if this proves to be the Way of the Cross” (FABC Bandung Statement, No.10).



Extract of a talk on “Mary Truly A Woman of Our Times” by Bishop Luis ‘Chito’ Tagle, Bishop of Imus Diocese and member of the Office of Theological Concerns FABC. at the East Asia Bishops’ Institute on Lay Apostolate (BILA) on Women II held at the St. Theresa’s Activity Centre, Hsinchu Diocese, Taiwan from 4th – 7th May, 2010

1. Mary as a youthful disciple – At the Annunciation Luke 1: 26 – 38. Today, Youth are presented as

a problem. Mary was a youth. What type of youth? She coped very well with an extraordinary situation, – the visit of an angel, bringing a message out of this world. This young girl was an image of composure and equanimity. She asked intelligent questions, she knew how to listen; she knew how to discern and acted in faith upon divine invitation. In Mary we discover the grace of youth. The grace of youthful discipleship.

Youth Desk

We need to inspire youth to discover the capacity to cope with mission early in their lives. To affirm their intelligence, to be discerning, to hope as the character exhibited by Mary. Our young people are vulnerable to exploitation by media and the consumerist world. Part of our mission is to discover the youth manifested in Mary and help our youth to listen, be discerning, and act... (The full text will be available soon)

Laity Congress in Seoul organized by

Pontifical Council of the Laity

This congress was attended by three members of the Office of Laity and Family – Our chairman, Bishop Roldando Tria Tirona who also made a presentation on family, New Executive Secretary for AsIPA Desk Bibiana Joo Hyun Ro and Youth Desk Executive Secretary, Jessica Joy Candelario. In this picture they are seen with Cardinal Stanislaw Rylko President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity.

Here is an extract of the paper by Bishop Tirona:

1. The Christian family is founded on the love of Jesus.

The Christian family as a “domestic church” must experience the Evangelical love that vivifies the Church. It must exude this life of love to every other family. How is this possible? Primarily, by being a loving presence to one’s family (ad intra) and to the other families (ad extra). By being “just there, wasting time” so to say, especially to families devoid of love. St. John of the Cross says: “Where there is no love put love and you will draw out love.”

A concrete pastoral care of the family is seen in the Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs), where the family comes to know and experience the loving presence of God through the Holy Scriptures, and where love is deeply encouraged following the mandate of the Lord Jesus.

The exercise of the ‘dialogue of life’ that cares in the midst of our non-Christian Asian families is another effective way to bring about this loving presence. This dialogue of life-love can be occasion for the explicit proclamation of the Good News. With the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Christian family is empowered to be an evangelizer to other families. The evangelizing family becomes a loving presence of God to these families.

2. Prophetic mission and care:

In the vast continent of Asia, many



people go through two major painful experiences: first, massive poverty, and secondly, oppression due to unjust structures. In most Asian countries there exists a wide gap in opportunities and resources between the rich and the poor resulting in the rich become richer and the poor become poorer. This appalling situation victimizes foremost the families. Evidently, this is not acceptable to God. This should not be acceptable to the Church of Jesus which is called to be the Church of the poor.

The prophetic mission and care of the family consist primarily in proclaiming the truths and values of the Gospels through evangelization, catechesis and especially through witness of life. It also involves a courageous engagement for the cause of justice, peace, sustainable development and the total well-being of the family.

The Christian family must stand up and be heard in protest against any attempt of laws or practices that deny or diminish the natural vocation of every family to grow and develop. (Ex. Filipinos against RH Bill, or D.E.A.T.H. Bills in the Philippines) The 1980 Synod of Bishops emphasized the eleven rights of the family (pg 33) and how the Church and every Christian family must be ready to defend vigorously against the pressures of the State.

Prophetic consciousness must be instilled in the family through formation on justice and through awareness of the Social Teachings, considered the hidden treasures of Church.

The Asian youth must be formed in prophetic consciousness since they are the common target of distorted values peddled by consumerism and cheap sensationalism in media.

3. The Promotion of family welfare.

Reflections on the Asian family in society and in the Church inevitably reveal the stark reality of poverty among many Asian families which is aggravated by natural disasters so common to the region. Unfortunately, the ineffective intervention of the State and corrupt practices add to the misery of the victimized families. With these terrible situations the poor families could not immediately get back to their normal lives.

In no.32 of Ecclesia in Asia we read: “The Church in Asia then, with its multitude of poor and oppressed people, is called to live a communion of life which shows itself particularly in the loving service of the poor and the defenseless.”

The Christian family must be a community of service with compassion, empathy and generosity willing to share its time, talents and treasures to those in dire need. Its charity goes beyond the borders of one’s family, society and country.

5th FABC&CBF Asia-Oceania Biblical Congress and the BIBA III was organized by the Office of Evangelization in collaboration with Catholic Biblical Federation was attended also by Executive secretary AsIPA Desk, Bibiana Joo Hyun Ro who presented a paper. An extract of her paper is below:

The Word of God in Small Christian Communities (SCCs)

Introduction

Knowing what is AsIPA (Asian Integral pastoral Approach), and deepening understanding of the essential four marks of SCCs and gospel sharing methods are important for us. Because they imply why and how SCCs are “true expressions of ecclesial communion and centers of evangelization” (EN. no. 58; CL. no. 26, 51). In other words, forming SCCs based on the Word is all about “How can we implant the Word of God into the people of God and their daily lives, and who should be the subjects and agents of evangelization, mission of the Church today?” which were theme of the Synod on the Word in 2008, Rome, and the topic we are dealing with during this Biblical Congress and BIBA III.

.....

The Seven Steps Gospel Sharing Method

Using the Seven Steps gospel sharing as a basis of SCCs has generated significant changes. The following story shows how the Seven Steps gospel sharing influences SCCs members in many ways.

In the year of 2000, a group of 20 Koreans, had an exposure programme on small Christian communities in Mangalore and Goa dioceses in India. When they had a meeting with about 100 SCCs leaders of one parish in Mangalore, someone raised a question, “What good has the Seven Steps of gospel sharing done to you?” The spontaneous replies given by the members really gave us insights into how the Seven Steps has been a great tool for growth in Christian life. Some of their replies were: “The word of God has changed my life”; “Now I

have come closer to my neighbour in love”; “Family prayer has become very important for me now”; “I have come closer to my family members”; “In the beginning only a few were participating in the step 5, now the number has increased and it has bonded us together”; “The word of life in the step 6 gives daily spiritual nourishment”; “This method gives us strength to serve the needy every month with a definite activity”; “Due to this method, the word of God has effectively entered our life.”

This is not only a particular story about the Seven Steps gospel sharing but about most SCCs members’ experience on it.

.....

5. The gains and challenges of the Seven Steps gospel sharing

5.1. Gains

There are many positive points which SCCs members have shared about their experience on the Seven Steps gospel sharing as follows: 1) It enhances the ordinary faithful to be familiar to the Bible; 2) It can be used by the ordinary people themselves without needing long and complicated training and theological experts; 3) By using coming Sunday scripture, Sunday Eucharist becomes more meaningful; 4) The role of facilitator signifies a new leadership style. Therefore, the members of SCCs can experience empowering, non-dominating, and

participatory leadership; 5) It is an effective instrument to building up community based on the Scripture and Christ-centered; 6) It helps members of SCCs link faith and life; 7) It encourages people to put the faith into practice; 8) It enables us to experience the presence of Jesus and to encounter with him personally; 9) It brings SCC members to open their hearts to and share their lives with one another in trust; 10) The Word of God becomes more alive in the midst of people.

5.2. Challenges

Some limitations and challenges of using the Seven Steps gospel sharing method would be raised.

- 1) Some find difficulties saying spontaneous prayers in step 1 and 7. Many ordinary people hardly joined spontaneous prayers. We need to practice it.
- 2) Sometimes, opening our heart to the Lord is not easy especially to those “who are worried and troubled over so many things”.
- 3) Personal sharing with others what the Lord has spoken to me personally for my conversion is indeed difficult because we are not habituated to this.
- 4) At every meeting of SCCs, making plans about a service activity for the needy and social issues in neighborhood would be strenuous.
- 5) The danger of the Seven Steps method is that the members of SCCs



Group Photo of BIBA III

may stay at the purely personal level rather than extending their horizon into the neighborhood and society. If step 6 is not accomplished well, SCCs may be too self-centered or parish-centered. That is the reason why SCCs have to use other gospel methods from time to time.

6) Some people regard the Seven Steps method as a superficial exercise. They say, "It is about personal sharing of the Word of God without intellectual views and opinions." But this is different approach from the Bi-

ble study or discussion.

7) Some say that SCCs members are likely to understand the actual meaning of the Scripture wrongly or inappropriately in the Seven Steps method. However, in this gospel sharing, the most important thing is not whether all the participants have grasped the exegetical meaning of the text or not. We avoid just "talking about" Jesus, or "discussing" the original meaning the Biblical text, as important as this is, at other times. This gospel sharing aims at encour-

tering with Jesus, the Word of God personally in the life. The promise, "Where two or three comes together in my name, there I am with them" (Mt.18:20).

SCCs based on the Word of God are not one of the movements in the Church but a concrete expression of the Church in movement. Experiencing the Word of God is the foremost way to foster SCCs which seeks to embody a new way of being Church—a participatory Church in Asia. We are the Church.



GLOBAL : Empowerment of women and girls tops agenda at UN Economic and Social Council

28 June 2010 – The annual high-level segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) opened today with speakers calling for women and girls to be placed at the centre of the global struggle to achieve the social and economic targets known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

This year's focus "allows us to strengthen the linkages between gender equality, women's human rights and non-discrimination as a basis for progress in development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals," said ECOSOC President Hamidon Ali, referring to the eight goals that world leaders have agreed to try to realize before their 2015 deadline.

In his opening address to the meeting, held at UN Headquarters in New York, Mr. Ali said that while the third goal relates directly to the empowerment of women, "all MDGs are dependant upon women having a greater say in their own development." He noted specifically the need for greater cooperation to end violence against women and girls, and the empowerment of rural women as a critical force in reducing poverty and hunger.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in

his opening remarks, told government ministers that "until women and girls are liberated from poverty and injustice, all our goals – peace, security, sustainable development – stand in jeopardy." Mr. Ban noted that this year is a "landmark year for gender issues" with the 15th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – which remains the most comprehensive global policy framework to achieve the goals of gender equality, development and peace – and the 10th anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 on women and peace and security.

In addition to senior UN officials, the audience heard today from special speakers, including Michelle Bachelet, former Chilean president. Recalling her own election as the first female Chilean president and the increasing participation of women in the political sphere, Ms. Bachelet called on the international community "to move mountains" to end the persistent injustice the women faced.

Meanwhile, Frances Stewart, Professor of Development Economics and Director of the Centre for Research and Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity at Oxford University, warned that the progress made to date was being threatened by intersecting crises of food security, finan-

cial markets, human rights and security, and climate change.

She cautioned that the least progress was being made in the security domain, where despite a decline in wars and violent conflict over the past 15 years, general violence of which women were the prime victims remained unacceptably high.

In addition to the annual ministerial review, the high-level segment of the ECOSOC substantive session will include the Development Cooperation Forum, which aims to strengthen global partnerships for development.

The end result of this week's discussions will be a "short and action-oriented" ministerial declaration that can be "understood by the man-in-the-street," Mr. Ali said. The declaration will serve as a component to this September's high-level summit convened by Mr. Ban to try to urge world leaders to accelerate progress towards the MDGs ahead of 2015. - <http://www.un.org> Catholic News Update Asia 29/6/10

For matters concerning Women's Desk please contact:

Wendy Louis

FABC, Office of Laity and Family,
2 Highland Road #01-09

Singapore 549102

Email: fabc.laity@gmail.com

Tel: 65-96265911

AsIPA Desk

643-1, Junggok 1-dong, Gwangjin-gu,
Seoul, Korea (143-912)
Tel: 82-10-45035924
asipafabc@gmail.com

Women's Desk

CAEC, 2 Highland Road, #01-09
Singapore 549102
Tel: 65-68587081
fabc.laityfamily@gmail.com

Youth Desk

Maryhill Compound, Km.
22 Ortigas Ave. Ext., Taytay,
Rizal, Philippines.
(63-2) 658 5064
asianyouthdesk@gmail.com